

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5, 11, 14-17, and 19 are pending in the present application.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 5, 11, 14-17, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Apel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,806,701, hereinafter Apel) in view of Stumpe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,448,761, hereinafter Stumpe).

With respect to the rejection of the claims as unpatentable over Apel in view of Stumpe, Applicants respectfully perfect their claim to their foreign priority date.

Apel was filed on October 10, 2002. This is after the French priority date of April 9, 2002. Therefore, to perfect priority and to overcome all the rejections based on Apel, enclosed is an English translations of the French priority application, along with a statement that the translation is accurate. Consequently, Apel is not prior art.

It is noted that Apel is a continuation-in-part of application serial no. 09/788,630. However, the subject matter in Apel relied upon by the Office in rejecting the present claims is not supported by application serial no. 09/788,630. The Office relies on Figs. 13-15 of Apel when rejecting the present claims. Figs. 13-15 of Apel are not included in application serial no. 09/788,630. Thus, the subject matter relied upon to reject the present claims is not entitled to the filing date of application serial no. 09/788,630.

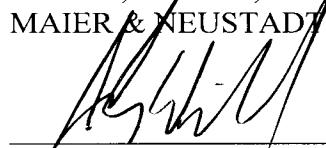
Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Apel is not prior art, and that the subject matter of Apel that is relied upon in the outstanding rejection is not entitled to the priority date of application serial no. 09/788,630. Applicants respectfully submit that the outstanding grounds of rejection are overcome.

Finally, it is requested that the Office acknowledge Applicants' claim to foreign priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document on the next Office communication.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for formal allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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